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ABSTRACT

When "Roots" first aired as an Odyssey Network television miniseries in 1977, it made history. "Roots" prompted people of many backgrounds to take a closer look at their personal heritage, ancestry, and ethnic identity. Together, Alex Haley's novel and the television program made several distinct contributions. They raised consciousness about the habits, rituals, values, and myths of African culture and ways. They brought about a new understanding of slavery as an institution. The history about an African ancestor, Kunte Kinte, passed down from generation to generation in the Haley family, became the centerpiece of stories that were knitted together in an oral tradition for young Alex Haley. The "Roots" television series is based on some parts of the prize-winning book. An estimated 130 million viewers saw all or part of the 8 episode miniseries first broadcast on 8 consecutive nights in January 1977. This study guide is designed to complement the Odyssey Channel's repeat showing, 24 years later in February of 2001, of this remarkable miniseries. The study guide cites student educational objectives, discusses how it can be used to correlate with selected National History Standards, and lists social studies themes related to the guide. For each episode, the study guide provides a short overview of the story and previewing and post-viewing activities. It also provides activities to help students examine their own roots. Activities include compiling a family tree, collecting and retelling stories, creating memory postcards, and assembling photos and memorabilia. (BT)

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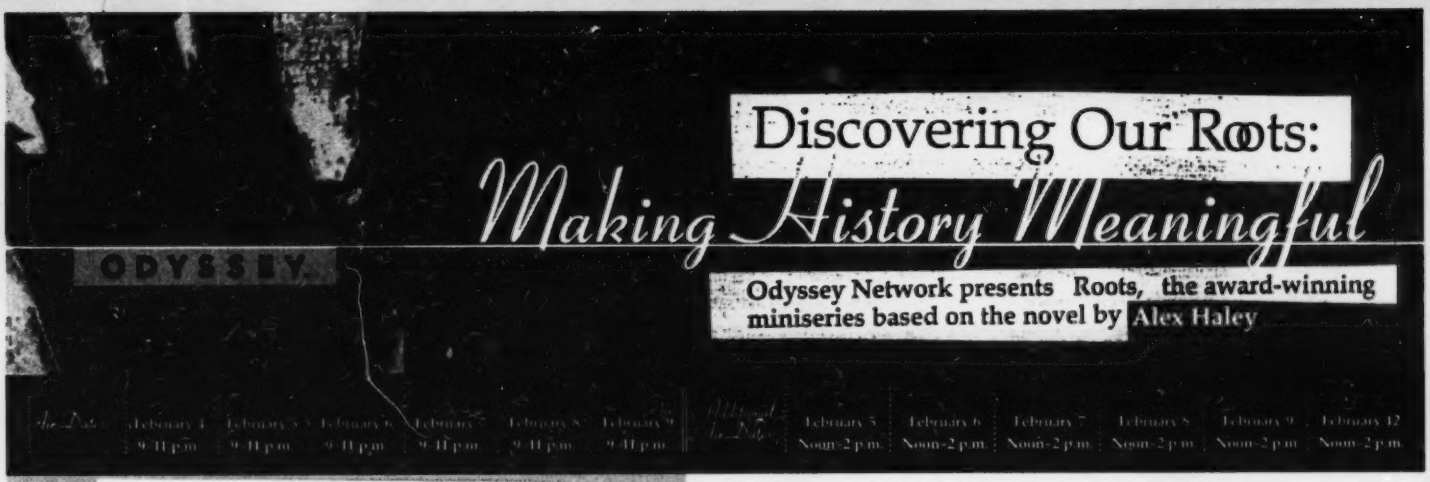

Discovering Our Roots: Making History Meaningful

Odyssey Network presents Roots, the award-winning miniseries based on the novel by Alex Haley

Grade Levels: Middle School and High School
Curriculum Areas:
U.S. and World History, Social Studies

"THE ANCESTORS OF ALL OF US CAME ACROSS THAT SAME OCEAN IN SOME SHIP. WE MUST LEARN NOT ONLY TO LIVE TOGETHER BUT LEARN TO SEE ONE ANOTHER AS PEOPLE RATHER THAN AS STEREOTYPES."

–Alex Haley

OBJECTIVES

- To examine the relationships between cultures and belief systems that shaped African-American and U.S. history
- To draw connections among family history, ethnic genealogy, and American history
- To help viewers consider the degree to which white and black histories are inseparable

NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS

This educators' guide is designed to help teachers use "Roots" as a springboard for discussion and activities that correlate with selected U.S. history standards found in the K–12 content standards indicated by McREL, Mid-continent Research Education and Learning, and with selected social studies themes indicated by the National Council for the Social Studies.

History standards and benchmarks related to this guide:

- Eras 2 through 5 of U.S. history standards, which comprise the periods from colonization and settlement through the Civil War.
- Historical understandings that involve:
  1) analyzing chronological relationships and patterns and
  2) understanding the historical perspective.

Social studies themes related to this guide:

- Culture
- Time, continuity, and change
- People, places, and environment
- Individual development and identity
- Individuals, groups, and institutions

For more information visit <http://www.mcrel.org/standards> and <http://www.ncss.org/standards>

BACKGROUND

When "Roots" first aired as a television miniseries in 1977, it made history. Historians credit the broadcast with being the stimulus that changed the history of American popular culture. "Roots" prompted Americans of many backgrounds to take a closer look into their personal heritage, ancestry, and ethnic identity. Together, Haley's novel and the television program made several distinct contributions. They raised consciousness about the habits, rituals, values, and myths of African culture and ways. They also brought about a new understanding of slavery as an institution. The novel and the television program elevated respect for the oral tradition's imprint on our cultural record, and they cast light on the importance of each family's contribution to American history. Now Odyssey brings this remarkable experience back to American viewers.

Author Alex Haley first heard about his African ancestor, Kunta Kinte, while he was a boy living with his grandmother in Tennessee. His family members took pride and pleasure in passing down their history from generation to generation. Kunta Kinte became the centerpiece of stories that were knitted together in an oral tradition for young Haley. For the grown man, these stories spurred 12 years of archival and shipboard research. Those data, along with Haley's imagination, gave rise to *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, the novel that inspired this made-for-television series.

Roots: The Saga of an American Family was first published in the fall of 1976. Within two years, it had won 271 awards, including the Pulitzer Prize and the 1977 National Book Award. It sold more than 8 million copies and to date, *Roots* has been published in 35 languages. The "Roots" television program is based on some parts of the novel and was an epic in television history. An estimated 130 million viewers saw all or part of the eight-episode miniseries (later to be six episodes) that was first broadcast on eight consecutive nights in January 1977. The series won 145 honors, including nine Emmy Awards and television's prestigious Peabody Award.

After "Roots" aired, interest in genealogy blossomed in the United States. Haley first explored his family heritage in the National Archives. Eventually, his expedition reached into 50 or more archives, libraries, and research repositories on three different continents. In response to the novel and program that resulted from this research, letters of inquiry and applications to use the National Archives rose by 40 percent, and requests to examine census manuscripts tripled. Some 267 colleges included *Roots* in their coursework. New books on genealogy flourished as heritage research became a popular hobby. Haley's work inspired the PBS 10-part series, "Ancestors." Genealogy Web sites, software, lectures, and clubs are still popular today.

NOTE: BOTH THE NOVEL AND THE BROADCAST ARE ACCEPTED AS "FACTION," HALEY'S TERM THAT DESCRIBES HIS MIXTURE OF FACT AND FICTION, A DEPICTION OF REAL PEOPLE WITH SOME ASPECTS OF THEIR LIVES NOVELIZED. ALEX HALEY DIED UNEXPECTEDLY IN 1992 AT AGE 71, BUT HE LEFT A TREMENDOUS LEGACY IN THE CHARACTER AND FAMILY OF KUNTA KINTE, WHOSE STORY IS RECOGNIZED AROUND THE WORLD.

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SYNOPSES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

The story of the six generations of one family depicted in "Roots" is based on the lineage of Alex Haley's family and is told through the vehicle of Kunta Kinte, a Mandinkan born in 1750 in Juffure, a small village in Gambia, West Africa. "Roots" is a series of stories about Kunta Kinte's early life in Africa, his capture and transport on a slave ship to America, his enslavement during the birth of the United States, and the evolution of his family up through the Civil War. Through the most brutal treatment, he and those who followed him retained an African heritage and their pride.

For each episode, discuss the pre-viewing question in preparation for focusing on certain themes throughout the episode. After each episode, discuss the post-viewing questions to expand upon what you have learned.

Episode 1 In 1750, Kunta Kinte is born to Omoro and Binta in an African village, where he experiences the traditional rites of passage. During his teen years, he is sent to manhood training; however, slave traders kidnap him in 1767. He endures a horrific trip aboard the slave ship *Lord Ligonier* that travels the "Middle Passage" route from Africa. Kunta Kinte refuses to accept his slave name of Toby in an effort to retain his culture.

PRE-VIEWING:

- Identify some of the cultural habits, values, rituals, and myths that are the foundation for West African culture and belief systems.

POST-VIEWING:

- Make connections among the world's nations and tribes during this period in world history. Describe the similarities and differences between the ways that the Africans in this program meet their human needs and the ways of Native Americans or immigrants to America.
- Discuss the traditions that are shown in Episode 1 and compare those traditions to modern American culture.

Episode 2 Kunta Kinte survives inhumane treatment and a violent rebellion aboard the slave ship, which eventually arrives at the port of Baltimore. Kunta Kinte is sold at an Annapolis slave auction and is befriended by Fiddler, a man in charge of slave training. The friendship is tested when Kunta Kinte plots an escape.

PRE-VIEWING:

- Observe examples of both subtle and obvious resistance that the Africans exhibit, which might explain their reaction to the hardships forced upon them.

POST-VIEWING:

- How does resistant behavior disprove suggestions that Africans were passive about serving as slaves? Give several examples of instances of defiance in "Roots."
- What conflict does the ship's captain face? How does he deal with that conflict?
- For what reasons did slavery flourish during the 17th–19th centuries? Do you agree or disagree that the institution of slavery permanently connects white and black histories? Support your answer with solid examples.

Episode 3 On several occasions, young Kunta Kinte escapes his captors. After one such incident, he is caught and brutally crippled by slave hunters. He marries Belle, the woman who nurses him and helps him recover from this beating. An opportunity to escape occurs again, but instead Kunta Kinte chooses his family over his freedom. He and Belle name their newborn daughter Kizzy, a name based on an African word meaning "stay put."

PRE-VIEWING:

- Observe the odds against which enslaved Africans preserve the institutions of marriage and the bonds of family.

POST-VIEWING:

- Discuss why it takes more or less courage for Kunta Kinte to remain behind rather than to escape slavery and find a better life.
- What events would you put on a timeline showing what was happening during this time to enslaved Africans versus free blacks who established homes elsewhere in North America? Compare and contrast the experiences of these two groups of people.

Episode 4 Despite their hardships, Kunta Kinte's family's bonds are strong. Their world is turned upside down when Kizzy, now a teenager, is sold to a distant plantation owner who impregnates her. Kizzy bears a son, George. Kizzy raises George, though, and familiarizes her son with African sounds and folktales. He grows up to become a gamecock trainer with the nickname "Chicken George." Meanwhile, Kizzy desperately misses her family. Kizzy returns to her parents' home and learns they have died.

PRE-VIEWING:

- Look for clues that show whether or not plantation owners were successful at isolating their slaves from information or at depriving them of their culture.

POST-VIEWING

- Consider the issue of cultural assimilation of the slaves versus maintaining their own heritage. Give examples of both from "Roots."
- What events and influences account for Kizzy's mindset? To what do you attribute her strong personal identity?

Episode 5 Chicken George is now a married man with two sons, and he operates a successful cockfight business for his owner. His master's reckless betting forces George to leave his family behind when he travels to England as payment for his owner's gambling debt. Fourteen years later he returns home as the first of Kunta Kinte's family to be free. The Civil War erupts, along with slave rebellions.

PRE-VIEWING:

- Explain the impact that a chance event has in shaping history for one family or, in some cases, the history for an entire nation.

POST-VIEWING:

- Why doesn't George's move to England permanently break his family's spirit? How might their lives have been different if he had remained at home?
- How did the work of abolitionists affect and transform slavery as an institution? What roles did women play?

Episode 6 Chicken George fights for the Union and, when the war is over, relocates his family to Tennessee. The terror continues even after the blacks are emancipated. The Ku Klux Klan's nightriders terrorize blacks and Tom, Chicken George's son, fears for his life because he is the blacksmith for these Klan members and can identify them.

PRE-VIEWING:

- Describe the political climate for former slaves after the Civil War and the degree to which freed slaves were able to live as full citizens.

POST-VIEWING

- What evidence exists that cultural beliefs and prejudices against minorities still require attention? Which groups or organizations work to combat hate and terrorism?
- Using the Internet, library, or community organizations, find examples of publications, electronic resources, and organizations that promote respect for oral traditions. Discuss your own experience with oral traditions. What do you feel are the benefits and/or drawbacks of passing down stories orally?

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YOUR ROOTS AS COMMUNITY HISTORY: ACTIVITIES

"A NATION'S HISTORY IS ONLY THE COLLECTIVE HISTORIES OF ALL OF ITS PEOPLE. AS PEOPLE'S HISTORIES UNFOLD, A NATION'S CULTURE CAN BE STUDIED IN ITS FULLEST MEANING."

–*Alex Haley*

In his foreword to *Ethnic Genealogy: A Research Guide*, Alex Haley notes that uncovering and preserving family history that otherwise would be lost forever is important to understanding history as a whole.

In this activity, students honor the past by making a heritage scrapbook that reflects their family or community's history. Students can share the scrapbook during celebrations held throughout the year and the scrapbooks can be evaluated on the basis of creativity, comprehensiveness, and accuracy in relation to historical events. Ask students to write thank-you notes to all contributors.

SKILLS TO BE DEVELOPED:

- Working with primary and secondary sources to conduct simple genealogical research
- Researching and documenting important events and memories to give historical context
- Recording, interviewing, and developing literary and graphic composition skills

Compile a Family Tree
Fill in simple details of a family tree with names, dates, and locations of births and deaths. Family history forms are available for purchase or you can make your own. Genealogy Web sites, such as the one at <http://www.genealogy.com>, can lead you to other relevant primary and secondary sources.

Collect and Retell Stories
Interview relatives or interesting people from your school or community. Listen, take notes, tape the interview (with permission), and retell favorite stories describing special events, daily life, work, or play. Share these stories aloud with the class and also paste written excerpts from the stories in the scrapbook.

Create Your Own Memory Postcards
Buy or create memory postcards. Draw a picture or attach a photograph to the front of the postcard and write a question on the back. Mail your postcards (with a stamp and your return address) in envelopes to relatives or others. Glue the most interesting response cards directly into the heritage scrapbook.

Use Voices for Posterity
A memory button from Memory Technology, Inc. is a recording device that captures speech for 10 seconds. It is small enough to fit in a scrapbook. Record your favorite 10 seconds of dialogue from one or more of your interviews and put in the scrapbook for others to hear. The button is available from Memory Technology, Inc. at <http://www.memorybutton.com> or by calling toll-free (877) MEM-BUTTON.

Assemble Photos and Memorabilia
Collect old photos, newspapers, magazines, and books that depict the time frames you are studying from relatives, interviewees, or other sources. Gather mementos, such as advertisements or small toys or knickknacks, that reflect popular culture of the times.

Write Narratives and Captions
Write captions and small essays giving the historical contexts for stories, photos, and memorabilia. Include names, settings, and descriptions of what is taking place. Find guidance online at Utah State University's Oral History site at <http//www.usu.edu/~oralhist/oh.html>

NOTE: FAMILY GENEALOGY, WHILE INTRIGUING FOR SOME, MAY BE EMOTIONALLY CHARGED FOR OTHERS. ALTERNATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS ARE INCLUDED IN THE ACTIVITIES THAT FOLLOW SO THAT NO STUDENT WHO IS UNCOMFORTABLE IS REQUIRED TO FOCUS ON PERSONAL FAMILY HISTORY.

Tune In

Odyssey celebrates Black History Month with more programming exploring the heritage and lives of African Americans. Watch for the following programs on Odyssey:

"Roots: The Next Generation"

PREMIERES:		
	Parts 1 & 2	February 10, 2001 2–6 p.m.
	Parts 3 & 4	February 17, 2001 2–6 p.m.
	Parts 5, 6 & 7	February 24, 2001 2–8 p.m.

This continuation of the story of Kunta Kinte's descendants picks up where "Roots" left off. From the Jim Crow laws of post-Reconstruction America, to Alex Haley's father's service in France during World War I, to Haley's own experiences in the Pacific during World War II, "Roots: The Next Generation" continues to follow Kunta Kinte's descendants.

"Queen"

AIR DATE:		
	Parts 1 - 3	February 3, 2001 Noon–6 p.m.

"Queen" is based on the book *Alex Haley's Queen: The Story of an American Family*, which was Alex Haley's last project before his death. The program is devoted to the life of Haley's paternal grandmother, Queen Haley, before, during, and after the Civil War. Queen's mother was a black slave and her father was a white plantation owner. Haley's story tells of his grandmother's struggle for social acceptance because of the ambiguous color of her skin.

"Rose Hill"

AIR DATES:	
	January 31, 2001 9–11 p.m.
	February 1, 2001 Noon–2 p.m.

Based on the novel *For the Roses* by Julie Garwood, this program follows the lives of four street orphan boys and their adopted sister Mary Rose. The group travels from New York City to a cattle ranch in Montana, called Rose Hill, where Adam, the oldest, longs to become a black cowboy. This unlikely family survives many ups and downs in order to discover where they truly belong – together.

"Timepiece"

PREMIERES:	February 3, 2001 8–10 p.m.
ADDITIONAL AIR DATES:	February 4, 2001 4–6 p.m.
	February 17, 2001 Noon–2 p.m.
	February 22, 2001 9–11 p.m.
	February 23, 2001 Noon–2 p.m.

Based on the book by Richard Paul Evans, this prequel to "The Christmas Box" tells the story of Mary and David Parkin, their daughter Andrea, and their good friend Lawrence Flynn, an African-American clock-maker. An eruption of racially charged violence draws the family into a situation that results in tragedy, but ends in forgiveness and healing.

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RESOURCES

Use the following resources for more information. Also, find more information and inspiration at local libraries, genealogical societies, or family history centers.

Books

COLLETTA, JOHN PHILIP. *They Came in Ships: A Guide to Finding Your Immigrant Ancestor's Arrival Record.* SALT LAKE CITY, UT: ANCESTRY, INC., 1998.

EVANS, RICHARD PAUL. *Timepiece.* NEW YORK: SIMON & SCHUSTER, 1996.

GARWOOD, JULIE. *For the Roses.* NEW YORK: SIMON & SCHUSTER TRADE, 1999.

HALEY, ALEX. *Roots: The Saga of an American Family.* NEW YORK: RANDOM HOUSE, 2000.

HALEY, ALEX. *Alex Haley's Queen: The Story of an American Family.* NEW YORK: MORROWAVON, 1993.

HALEY, ALEX. *Ethnic Genealogy: A Resource Guide.* NEW YORK: GREENWOOD PRESS, 1983.

WILLARD, JIM AND TERRY. *Ancestors: A Beginner's Guide to Family History and Genealogy.* NEW YORK: HOUGHTON MIFFLIN, 1997.

ZIMMERMAN, BILL. *How to Tape Instant Oral Biographies.* NEW YORK: GUARIONEX PRESS, 1998.

Videos

The following videos are available from Social Studies School Service by visiting <http://www.socialstudies.com> or by calling (800) 421-4246.

"A History of African-Americans: 1619-1970" A comprehensive fact-based history ranging from the American Colonial period to the Black protest movements of the 1970s.

"Operation Understanding" Six African-American and six Jewish-American students visit Senegal and Israel to discover their roots and to experience the pain of the severed roots of the past.

Web sites

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/intro.html >
African American Mosaic: A Library of Congress Resource Guide for the Study of Black History and Culture

<http://www.genealogy.com/genealogy/12_alexh.html>
Family History and Ethnic Genealogy by Alex Haley

<http://www.genealogy.com>
Web site with the tools for discovering your own roots online

<http://www.kintehaley.org>
The Kunta Kinte – Alex Haley Foundation

<http://familysearch.org>
Family Search: Internet Genealogy Service

<http://www.usu.edu/~oralhist/oh.html>
Utah State University's Oral History Program

<http://www.artnoir.com/asalh>
Association for the Study of African-American Life and History

<http://www.kbyu.org/ancestors>
Ancestors: The companion Web site to the PBS family history and genealogy television series

<http://www.naacp.org>
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Video Availability

"Roots," "Roots: The Next Generation," "Queen," "Rose Hill," and "Timepiece" are available on home video. Ask your media specialist for information, visit your local video store, or find them at an online retailer.

Cable in the Classroom

Odyssey's presentation of "Roots" is an important part of Odyssey's commitment to Cable in the Classroom, the industry-wide effort to offer commercial-free, curriculum-based programming for school use. Teachers may record this series and retain tapes for one year for use in the classroom for instructional purposes only.

Odyssey is showing special Cable in the Classroom presentations of "Roots" throughout the second half of the 2000–01 school year. These are shown during commercial-free overnight airings. The Cable in the Classroom airings of "Roots" are as follows:

Part 1	January 28, 2001	2–4 a.m.
Part 2	February 25, 2001	2–4 a.m.
Part 3	March 25, 2001	2–4 a.m.
Part 4	April 29, 2001	2–4 a.m.
Part 5	May 27, 2001	2–4 a.m.
Part 6	June 24, 2001	2–4 a.m.

Visit odysseychannel.com for more information about the Odyssey Network and its programming.

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"DISCOVERING OUR ROOTS: MAKING HISTORY MEANINGFUL," A GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS FOR ODYSSEY'S PRESENTATION OF "ROOTS," MAY BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE OFFICIAL ODYSSEY NETWORK WEB SITE AT ODYSSEYCHANNEL.COM. THIS GUIDE WILL BE PERMANENTLY ARCHIVED AT WWW.KIDSNET.ORG.

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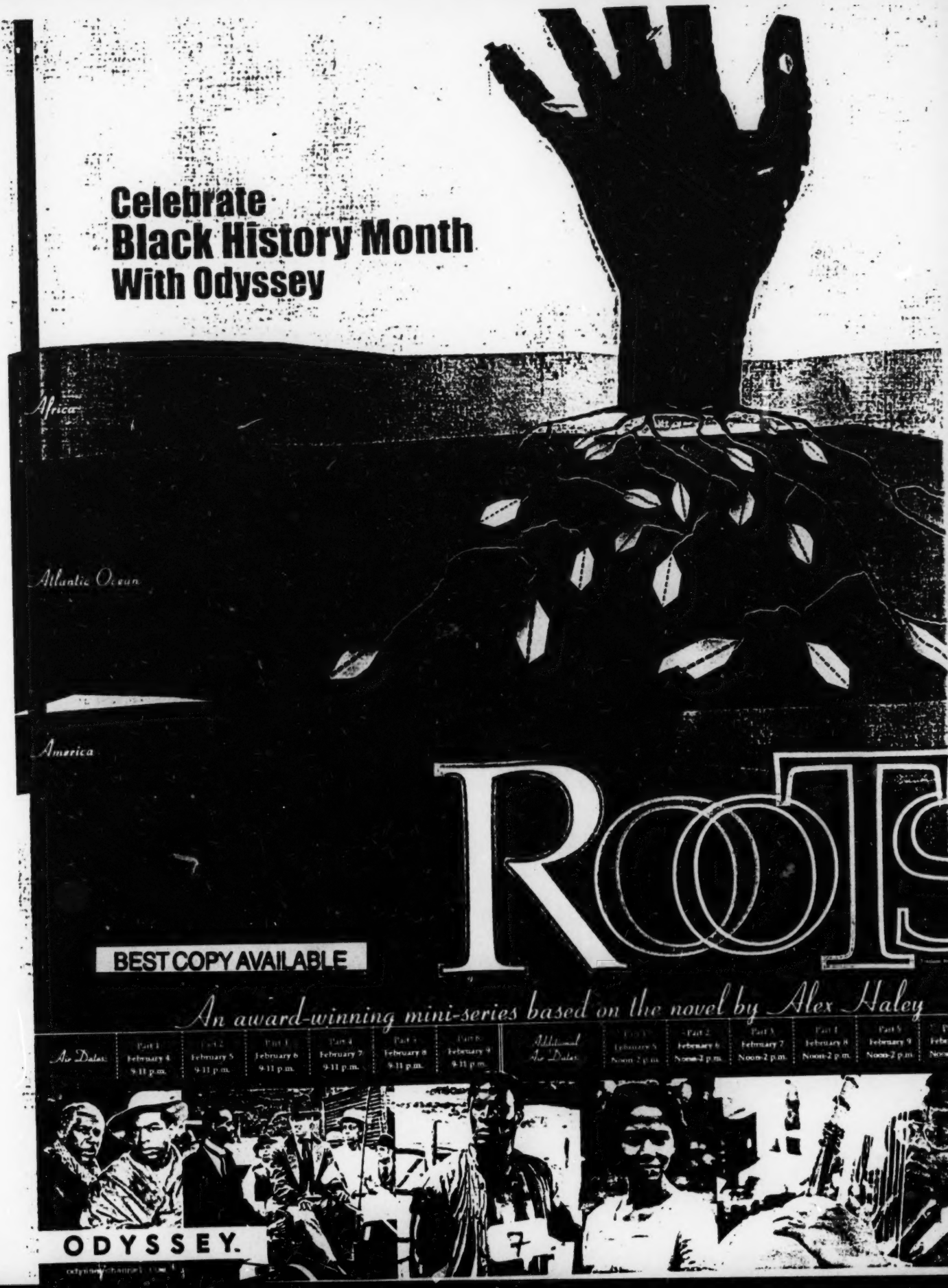
Celebrate
Black History Month
With Odyssey
Africa
Atlantic Ocean
America
ROOTS
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An award-winning mini-series based on the novel by Alex Haley
Air Dates:
Part 1 February 4 9-11 p.m.
Part 2 February 5 9-11 p.m.
Part 3 February 6 9-11 p.m.
Part 4 February 7 9-11 p.m.
Part 5 February 8 9-11 p.m.
Part 6 February 9 9-11 p.m.
Additional Air Dates:
Part 1 February 5 Noon-2 p.m.
Part 2 February 6 Noon-2 p.m.
Part 3 February 7 Noon-2 p.m.
Part 4 February 8 Noon-2 p.m.
Part 5 February 9 Noon-2 p.m.
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